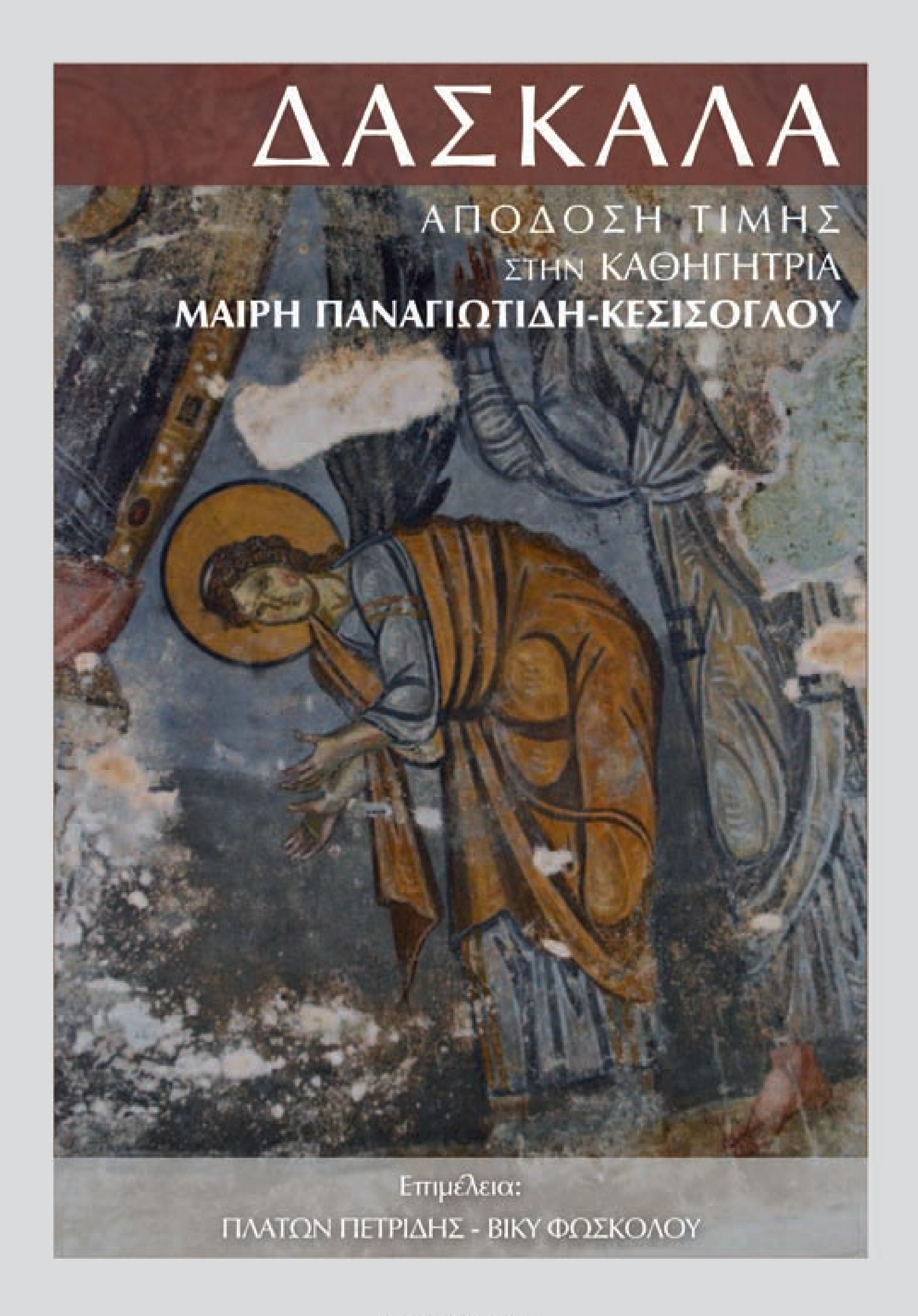
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ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΑΚΟ
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ
ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ

ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ
Σ. ΣΑΡΙΠΟΛΟΥ

# ΔΑΣΚΑΛΑ

## ΑΠΟΔΟΣΗ ΤΙΜΗΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΡΙΑ
## ΜΑΙΡΗ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΙΔΗ-ΚΕΣΙΣΟΓΛΟΥ



Επιμέλεια:
ΠΛΑΤΩΝ ΠΕΤΡΙΔΗΣ - ΒΙΚΥ ΦΩΣΚΟΛΟΥ

ΑΘΗΝΑ 2015



Μαίρη Παναγιωτίδη-Κεσίσογλου

***ΔΑΣΚΑΛΑ***

ΑΠΟΔΟΣΗ ΤΙΜΗΣ
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ΜΑΙΡΗ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΙΔΗ-ΚΕΣΙΣΟΓΛΟΥ

**Έκδοση:** Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών
Σαριπόλειο Ίδρυμα

Αθήνα 2014

**Εξώφυλλο:** Π. Πετρίδης
*Φωτογραφία:* Θ. Κωνσταντέλλου. *Λεπτομέρεια από την κεντρική αψίδα της Παναγίας Καλορίτισσας Νάξου (β΄ τέταρτο 10ου αιώνα)*

**Φωτογραφία τιμώμενης:** Π. Πετρίδης
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**Διορθώσεις - Επιμέλεια:** Γεωργία Φραγκάκη

**Επιμέλεια - Έκδοση – Παραγωγή:**
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**ISBN:** 978-960-526-030-9

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Επιμέλεια
Πλάτων Πετρίδης – Βίκυ Φωσκόλου

ΑΘΗΝΑ 2014

# ΠΙΝΑΚΑΣ ΠΕΡΙΕΧΟΜΕΝΩΝ

# ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΕΣ

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|---|---|
| *ΑΑΑ* | *Ἀρχαιολογικά Ἀνάλεκτα ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν* |
| *ΑΒΜΕ* | *Ἀρχεῖον τῶν Βυζαντινῶν Μνημείων τῆς Ἑλλάδος* |
| *ΑΔ* | *Ἀρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* |
| *ΑΕ* | *Ἀρχαιολογική Ἐφημερίς* |
| *ΑΕΘΣΕ* | *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο Θεσσαλίας και Στερεάς Ελλάδας* |
| *ΑΕΜ* | *Ἀρχεῖον Εὐβοϊκῶν Μελετῶν* |
| *ΑΕΜΘ* | *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη* |
| *ΔΧΑΕ* | *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* |
| *ΔωδΧρ* | *Δωδεκαννησιακά Χρονικά* |
| *Δωδώνη* | *Δωδώνη. Επιστημονική Επετηρίδα Πανεπιστημίου Ιωαννίνων Τμήμα Ιστορίας & Αρχαιολογίας* |
| *ΕΕΒοιΜ* | *Ἐπιστημονική Ἐπετηρίς Βοιωτικῶν Μελετῶν* |
| *ΕΕΒΣ* | *Ἐπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* |
| *ΕΕΠΣΠΘ* | *Ἐπιστημονική Ἐπετηρίς Πολυτεχνικῆς Σχολῆς Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* |
| *ΗπειρΧρον* | *Ηπειρωτικά Χρονικά* |
| *ΚρητΧρον* | *Κρητικά Χρονικά* |
| *ΠΑΕ* | *Πρακτικά τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* |
| *Συμπόσιο ΧΑΕ* | *Χριστιανική Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία. Συμπόσιο Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης. Πρόγραμμα και Περιλήψεις Ανακοινώσεων* |

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|---|---|
| *Agora* | *The Athenian Agora. Results of Excavations conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* |
| *AJA* | *American Journal of Archaeology* |
| *ArtB* | *The Art Bulletin* |
| *BAR* | *British Archaeological Reports* |
| *BCH* | *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* |
| *BCH Suppl.* | *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique. Supplément* |
| *BMGS* | *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* |
| *BSA* | *The Annual of the British School at Athens* |
| *BSAC* | *Bulletin de la Societé d'Archéologie Copte* |
| *BSCAbstr* | *Byzantine Studies Conference, Abstracts of Papers* |
| *Bull. De CIETA* | *Bulletin de Centre International d'Études des Textiles Anciens* |
| *Byz* | *Byzantion* |
| *ByzF* | *Byzantinische Forschungen* |
| *ByzSorb* | *Byzantina Sorbonensia* |
| *BZ* | *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* |
| *CahArch* | *Cahiers Archéologiques* |
| *CahBalk* | *Cahiers Balkaniques* |
| *CCE* | *Cahiers de la Céramique Égyptienne* |
| *CFHB* | *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* |
| *CIETA* | *Centre International d'Études des Textiles Anciens* |
| *Corinth* | *Corinth. Results of Excavations conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* |
| *CorsiRav* | *Corsi di Cultura sull' Arte Ravennate e Bizantina* |
| *CSHB* | *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* |
| *DOP* | *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* |
| *DOS* | *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* |
| *EO* | *Échos d'Orient* |

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| *Hesperia Suppl.* | *Hesperia Supplement* |
| *HilZb* | *Hilandarski Zbornik* |
| *Hugoye* | *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* |
| *IstMitt* | *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* |
| *JBAA* | *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* |
| *JDAI* | *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* |
| *JÖB* | *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* |
| *JÖBG* | *Jahrburch der Österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft* |
| *JRS* | *Journal of Roman Studies* |
| *LCI* | *Lexikon der christichen Ikonographie* |
| *LCL* | *Loeb Classical Library* |
| *LdM* | *Lexikon des Mittelalters* |
| *MDIA* | *Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens* |
| *MEFRM* | *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Moyen Âge* |
| *NPNF* | *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* |
| *ODB* | *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* |
| *PG* | *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca, J.-P. Migne (εκδ.), Παρίσι 1857-1866* |
| *PL* | *Patrologia cursus completus, Series latina, J.-P. Migne (εκδ.), Παρίσι 1844-1880* |
| *PLP* | *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* |
| *PO* | *Patrologia Orientalis* |
| *RbK* | *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst* |
| *REB* | *Revue des Études Byzantines* |
| *REG* | *Revue des Études Grecques* |
| *RIASA* | *Rivista dell' Instituto Nazionale d'Archeologia e Storia dell' Arte* |
| *RömQ* | *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* |

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|---|---|
| *RSR* | *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* |
| *SlavRev* | *Slavic Review* |
| *TIB* | *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* |
| *TLG* | *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* |
| *TM* | *Travaux et Mémoires* |
| *VizVrem* | *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* |
| *WorldArch* | *World Archaeology* |
| *ZRVI* | *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* |
| *ZSU* | *Zbornik za Srednovekovna Umetnost* |

# The middle Byzantine sanctuary barriers of Mount Athos: Templon and iconostasis*

*Nicholas Melvani*

*The first great churches of Mount Athos, those of Lavra, Iviron and Vatopedi monasteries, as well as of the Protaton church in Karyes, were originally furnished with imposing sanctuary barriers consisting of colonnades supporting marble architraves. Their commonalities suggest that they were part of a general plan on behalf of the respective monasteries founders to import Constantinopolitan practices to Athos. Stylistic analysis and marble provenance also point to direct influence from the capital. The form of these early templa became the standard disposition for subsequent church buildings throughout the monastic community. Their importance was preserved until the early post-Byzantine period, since they formed the framework to which painted panels were gradually attached over the centuries.*

When Cyriac of Ancona visited the monasteries of Mount Athos in November 1444 he was struck by the marble decoration of the three great 10th-century churches of the Lavra, Iviron and Vatopedi monasteries. The Italian scholar went one step further and commented on the similarities between the three churches, by emphasizing the common features of

* I would like to thank professors Viktoria Kepetzi and Kriton Chrysochoidis for sharing their views on the subject with me. Of all my teachers at the University of Athens, Professor Maria Panayotidi was the one who first brought me into contact with Byzantine sculpture (of the Middle Byzantine period in particular), a field that later became my main field of specialization. Hence my decision to contribute to this volume a study dealing with Middle Byzantine sculpture.

their interior decoration, namely their columns, pavements and marble revetment.[1] One of the visual aspects that led Cyriac and many more scholars after him to this observation must have also been the imposing relief decoration situated in prominent locations within the respective monuments. The monumental sanctuary barriers, which are also interrelated, were probably the most impressive component of this marble decoration. These dominating structures, as well as the approximately contemporary one in the Protaton church in the administrative centre of Athos at Karyes, were an indispensable feature of the ambitious buildings and obviously formed an integral part of their planning from their inception. Their location and role as a screen separating the sanctuary from the rest of the church invested them with special importance from several points of view. Since numerous detailed studies dealing with the individual templa[2] have appeared during recent years, it is appropriate to undertake an analysis of the commonalities among the templa and place their significance in the wider context of Middle Byzantine sculpture. The present study aims to propose some analytical methods employing a variety of approaches by raising questions concerning the reasons for which the templa were built, the methods used for their completion and the role and function of these templa within their respective buildings. This approach entails putting together various pieces of evidence researched from different sources. Because of the scattered nature of these sources, such an approach is essential for the study of art and architecture during the early days of monasticism on Mount Athos. It elucidates the fundamental blend of spatial and liturgical concepts governing the construction of the great churches of the peninsula, as well as of subsequent monuments influenced by them. Moreover, analyzing these key monuments of such an early date offers crucial insight into other contemporary templa outside Athos and expands our knowledge on the history of the Middle Byzantine sanctuary barrier.

Although Cyriac does not specifically mention the templa under discussion, he was fortunate enough to view them in their original locations. Today, approaching the marble templa of Mount Athos is a complex task, since, with the exception of the one in the Protaton church, they are no longer extant in their original form. During the post-Byzantine period they were gradually replaced by wooden iconostasis screens loaded with painted icons and their components have often been reused in other parts within the same monastery or concealed behind the later structures. However, even when they have been removed from the sanctuary's entrance,

1. E. W. Bodnar, C. Mitchell, *Cyriacus of Ancona's Journeys in the Propontis and the northern Aegean, 1444-1445*, Philadelphia 1976, 50-56. E. W. Bodnar, C. Foss, *Cyriac of Ancona. Later Travels,* Cambridge, MA, London 2003, 120-133.
2. I have used the term templon with the meaning it has acquired in Modern Greek scholarship and usage, i.e. sanctuary barrier or chancel screen. For issues regarding terminology, see C. Walter, The Byzantine Sanctuary A World List, in C. C. Akentiev (ed.), *Liturgy, Architecture and Art in the Byzantine World. Papers of the XVIII International Byzantine Congress (Moscow, 8-15 August 1991) and Other Essays Dedicated to the Memory of Fr. John Meyendorff,* Saint Petersburg 1995, 95-106. I. Papangelos, Η σημασία του όρου «τέμπλον» κατά τους 11ον-13ον αιώνες, *7ο Συμπόσιο ΧΑΕ,* Athens 1987, 55-56.

they have left clear traces of their existence, usually their stylobate and thin piers or columns. Reconstructing the sanctuary barriers of these churches constitutes a basic stage in any attempt to study them either separately or in relation to each other. Theocharis Pazaras has dedicated numerous studies in this respect and has proposed convincing reconstructions for the sanctuary barriers of the main churches of Vatopedi and Iviron monasteries.[3] More recently, Sotiris Voyatzis has put forward an analogous reconstruction of the templon once situated in the main church of the Lavra monastery.[4] The only marble templon currently in place is the one in the Protaton church, studied by Anastasios Orlandos in the 1950s, who removed the church's post-Byzantine iconostasis and restored the sanctuary's entrance to its original form.[5]

The sanctuary barrier in the main church of Vatopedi monastery is an instructive representative of the Athonite templa and serves as a helpful guide to approach its counterparts in the other monasteries, since it is the most thoroughly studied example and appears to represent the most developed form of the type. It is no longer in place, but most of its components have been detected within the monastery, mainly reused in the 18th-century chapel dedicated to the Holy Girdle (Αγία Ζώνη). In its original form it comprised a long continuous architrave (fig. 1) stretching from north to south and resting on eight columns - four in the Bema and two in each of the *pastophoria*. The columns were crowned by variations of Corinthian capitals; those in the Bema are adorned with eagles (fig. 3) and those in the pastophoria with acanthus leaves. The entrance to the central apse was flanked by two rectangular closure slabs, whereas two more square plaques were attached to the lower part of the two eastern piers of the church (fig. 2). Two low posts in the middle of the structure were used to hold the Bema doors.[6]

A comparison with the evidence from the other monastic churches reveals the striking similarities between the templa in question. Pazaras has also reconstructed the screen of the church of Iviron monastery: the columns still remain in place, concealed behind the post-Byzantine wooden screen (fig. 4), but only one of the closure slabs flanking the doorway survives and is now embedded in a fountain outside the monasterys refectory (fig. 5).[7] Its

3. Th. Pazaras, Το μαρμάρινο τέμπλο του καθολικού της μονής Βατοπεδίου, *ΔΧΑΕ* περ. Δ΄, 18 (1995) 15-32. Idem, Το μαρμάρινο τέμπλο του καθολικού της Μονής Ιβήρων, in *Άγιον Όρος, Φύση-Λατρεία-Τέχνη*, 2, Thessaloniki 2001, 165-77.
4. S. Voyatzis, Σκέψεις και εικασίες γύρω από τη φιάλη της Ιεράς Μονής Μεγίστης Λαύρας στο Άγιον Όρος, *29ο Συμπόσιο ΧΑΕ*, Athens 2009, 26-27.
5. A. K. Orlandos, Το μαρμάρινον τέμπλον του Πρωτάτου των Καρυών, *ΕΕΒΣ* 23 (1953) 83-91. *Θησαυροί του Αγίου Όρους*, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki 1997, 236-237, no. 6.1 (Th. Pazaras). The first attempt at approaching the Athonite templa was by Bréhier: L. Bréhier, Clôtures de chœur dans les monastères de l'Athos, in *Atti del V Congresso internazionale di Studi Bizantini*, Rome 1940, 46-56.
6. Pazaras, (n. 3 Τέμπλο Βατοπεδίου), 15-32. Idem, *Βυζαντινά γλυπτά του Καθολικού της Μονής Βατοπεδίου*, Thessaloniki 2001, 35-47. For the chapel of the Hagia Zone, see M. Polyviou, Ο ναός της Αγίας Ζώνης στη μονή Βατοπεδίου, in P. Gounaridis (ed.), *Ιερά Μονή Βατοπεδίου. Ιστορία και Τέχνη*, Athens 1999, 155-170.
7. Pazaras, (n. 3 Τέμπλο Ιβήρων). For the fountain, see D. Liakos, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος σε κρήνες και φιάλες των αγιορειτικών μονών, *Βυζαντινά* 26 (2006) 350-351.

structure resembled the one in Vatopedi, but in this case more use has been made of *spolia*: the four columns of the Bema and their capitals are all reused early Christian items. Another distinctive feature is the fact that these columns rest on tall bases, also taken from an earlier building. The templon of the Protaton church exhibits analogous traits (fig. 6), but the closure slabs acquire a more elongated form (figs. 7, 14) and the small capitals crowning the capitals bear reduced forms of highly schematized acanthus leaves (fig. 8).[8] An essential difference in the layout of the Protaton templon is the transformation of the church's eastern piers flanking the entrance to the sanctuary into *proskynetaria* by the addition of archivolts made of stucco plaster (figs. 9, 14). These archivolts were evidently installed in order to serve as frames for the mosaics or frescoes adorning the piers.[9] The Lavra sanctuary barrier was removed from its original location in the 16th century, but the closure slabs have been detected in the monastery's fountain house (*φιάλη*), where they were placed as parapet slabs (fig. 10).[10] The reconstruction proposed by Sotiris Voyatzis suggests a similar disposition, as the one at Vatopedi.[11]

The four sanctuary barriers presented above conform to approximately the same structural principles: they consisted of four columns on a stylobate at the entrance to the Bema, surmounted by a horizontal lintel; the lower part of the intercolumnar spaces was blocked by rectangular closure slabs. To the north and south, the entrances to the pastophoria were marked by two columns each and separate lintels or extensions of the Bemas lintel. Another important resemblance lies in the dimensions of the structures under discussion, since, except for the Protaton templon, which is considerably taller and wider, the other three screens are of approximately the same size: the lintels are about 15 cm high, the capitals range from about 30-40 cm on each side and the closure slabs measure c. 1.15 by 1.60 m. The height of the columns of Vatopedi (2.75 m) is close to the combined height of the columns and bases of Iviron (c. 2.05 m + 0.55 m = 2.60 m). These analogies obviously reflect the similarities in the dimensions of the respective buildings (the *katholika* of Iviron and Vatopedi are almost identical in size) and the close resemblance between the architecture of the churches.[12]

8. Orlandos (n. 5). Orlandos had hypothesized that additional piers would have been placed on top of the closure slabs.
9. The proskynetaria icons were repainted in the 13th century; as a result it is impossible to determine if they originally bore the same subjects they display today (the Virgin and Child on the north pier and Christ Enthroned on the south): S. Kalopissi-Verti, The *Proskynetaria* of the *Templon* and Narthex: Form, Imagery, Spatial Connections, and Reception, in S. Gerstel (ed.), *Thresholds of the Sacred*, Washington D.C. 2006, 110. N. Teteriatnikov, New Artistic and Spiritual Trends in the *Proskynetaria* Fresco Icons of Manuel Panselinos, the Protaton, in L. Maurommatis (ed.), *Ο Μανουήλ Πανσέληνος και η εποχή του*, Athens 1999, 101-125.
10. L. Bouras, Some Observations on the Grand Phiale at Mount Athos and its Bronze Strobilion, *ΔΧΑΕ* περ. Δ΄, (1977-1979) 95-96. For the 16th-century *phiale* see Liakos (n. 7) 349.
11. Voyatzis (n. 4).
12. The similarities between the two monuments have been pointed out on numerous occasions as early as the 15th century (as shown in the opening paragraph of the present article). See for example T. Steppan, *Die Athos-Lavra und der trikonchale Kuppelnaos in der byzantinischen Archi-*

Only chemical analyses can offer solid proof concerning marble provenance and such research has not been undertaken for these monuments. Yet, the material used has been identified thanks to the personal experience of trained eyes and the results of the surveys undertaken are relatively secure. The evidence derived from this type of examination is revealing: it appears that in all cases the templa consist of heterogeneous material of varied provenance. The lintel from the Vatopedi templon is made of marble from Thasos, the cornices of the closure slabs are from Eretria marble and the posts flanking the entrance doors to the Bema are made of marble from Skyros.[13] The capitals of Iviron are of Thessalian marble. To these must be added the four central columns of the monastery's sanctuary barrier, which are all made of the same material, namely *verde antico*. The uniformity of the Iviron columns and their almost identical capitals can hardly be considered accidental; it is probable that they originate from the same Early Christian ensemble.[14]

In order to identify the source of the material used in the Athonite templa, two solutions are possible: the first is that at least the Early Christian items were obtained from late antique sites within Athos. The *Typikon* of the Lavra written by Saint Athanasius describes how during construction the monks and builders would search and quarry stone from areas in the vicinity of the Lavra[15] and it is reasonable to assume that the same procedure was implemented in the other great monasteries; in this case, the Athonites would have easily come across the remains of Early Christian buildings still visible at the time and arranged for their reuse in their monuments.[16]

A different route would be the purchase of material from one of the centres active in the commerce of marble, including spolia, as well as architectural members reworked in order to receive new decoration. Two cities are known to have operated in this manner, namely Constantinople and Thessaloniki.[17] Although the latter city cannot be ruled out completely,

*tektur*, Munich 1995, 121-125. S. Mamaloukos, *Το Καθολικό της Μονής Βατοπεδίου,* Athens 2001, 287.

13. Pazaras (n. 6) 35-43.
14. Pazaras, (n. 3 Τέμπλο Ιβήρων) 166-169.
15. P. Meyer, *Die Haupturkunden für die Geschichte der Athosklöster,* Amsterdam 1965, 105: "εἴς τε λατομίας καὶ κατορύξεις καὶ χωμάτων καὶ λίθων ἐκφόρησιν… πρὸς τὸ δείμασθαι τὸν ἅγιον τῆς ὑπεραγίας θεοτόκου ναόν."
16. Several columns and capitals, as well as the marble revetment of the walls in the church of Iviron monastery are also Early Christian. The most plausible explanation for the abundance of this material is that it was collected from a single site not far from the monasterys present location: Pazaras (n. 3 Τέμπλο Ιβήρων) 175-177. Besides, it is well known that Iviron was built on the location of the pre-existing monastery "tou Klementos". Moreover, ruins of an ancient city have been detected in the area of Vatopedi and it is possible that an ancient site lies close to Iviron as well: I. Papangelos, S. Paliobeis, Προχριστιανικές αρχαιότητες στον Άθω, *ΑΕΜΘ* 16 (2002) 394-395. These ruins could have supplied both monasteries with adequate material.
17. J.-P. Sodini, La sculpture byzantine (VIIe-XIIe siècles): acquis, problèmes et perspectives, in Ch. Pennas, C. Vanderheyde (eds), *La sculpture byzantine (VIIe-XIIe siècles) Actes du colloque international organisé par la 2e Éphorie des antiquitès byzantines et l'École française d'Athènes*, *6-8*

the links between the founders of the Lavra, of Iviron and of Vatopedi and the Byzantine capital point to provenance from Constantinople. Besides, it is known that during the 11th century building material was shipped to Athos from Constantinople for the completion of the Iviron church; this practice had probably been initiated already during the early days of the great cenobitic institutions and included marble components of templa as well.[18]

The employment of different materials of varied provenance resulted in the erection of heterogeneous structures. The same ensemble could include early Christian columns found nearby, as well as newly carved pieces from marble imported from Constantinople. This was not merely a compromise dictated by the shortage of marble from one source, but it must have been a conscious choice based on aesthetic principles: the polychromy derived from the juxtaposition of marbles of different colours would have contributed to the grandiose effect desired by patrons and builders. Besides, obtaining the material and assembling multiple parts were stages of a complex, versatile and costly procedure, which entailed thorough planning and exact coordination. After transporting all marble components of a templon, a master carver, perhaps aided by apprentices, would undertake the execution of the decorative scheme. The uniformity of the decoration and its harmonious integration within the overall context indicate that the craftsmen in question worked on site.[19] Placing the components in their destination would require the contribution of hoisting mechanisms, especially for erecting the columns and attaching the epistyle or architrave and would thus entail the participation of masons engaged on site.[20] To conclude, the patrons of the sanctuary barriers under discussion had access to a working force of considerable size and skills responsible for the logistics of sourcing and importing various types of marbles to Mount Athos, designing and assembling the pieces, executing the carvings and finally placing them in their positions.

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*septembre 2000,* Athènes 2008, 22-23. Ch. Bouras, Master Craftsmen, Craftsmen, and Building Activities in Byzantium, in A. Laiou (ed.) *The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, 2, Washington D.C. 2002, 553-554. J. Hermann, V. Barbin, A. Mentzos, Architectural Decoration and Marble from Thasos: Macedonia, Central Greece, Campania, Provence, in L. Lazzarini (ed.), *Interdisciplinary Studies on Ancient Stone, ASMOSIA VI, Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of the Association for the Study of Marble and Other Stones in Antiquity, Venice, June 15-18 2000*, Padova 2002, 329-350.

18. B. Martin-Hisard, La *Vie* de George l'Hagiorite, *REB* 64-65 (2006-2007) 59. The material in question was brought to Athos at the initiative of abbot George of Iviron. Saint Athanasius describes in his *Typikon* the established sea routes connecting Athos to the islands of the northern Aegean for commercial purposes: Meyer (n. 15) 105-106. The islands, including Thasos itself, could also have provided marble to the constructors of the monasteries. The same text mentions that the road from Thessaloniki to Athos by land was extremely difficult for animals to cross and was thus not convenient for transport.
19. H. Buchwald, Chancel Barrier Lintels Decorated with Carved Arcades, *JÖB* 45 (1995) 241-243.
20. See the remarks on erecting columns of Byzantine churches in R. Ousterhout, *Master Builders of Byzantium,* Princeton, N.J. 1999, 145-147.

Another aspect contributing to the homogeneity of the group in question is the common subject matter and decorative layout. The general concept, apart from the typical acanthus leaves of the small Corinthian capitals surmounting the columns, includes an architrave decorated with a repetitive vegetal theme forming a continuous frieze and closure slabs dominated by abstract geometric ornamentation, namely concentric lozenges, occasionally complemented by animal figures or foliate patterns. The Vatopedi epistyle also displays the so-called "Anatolian" theme, consisting of a row of stylized palmettes inscribed within arcades, on its central section, i.e. the one corresponding to the Bema. The epistyle is also notable for the carved lozenges adorning its underside; they repeat the theme of the closure slabs and thus bestow a strong sense of uniformity to the ensemble. The layout of the decoration on the Athonite templa follows a well-organized scheme characterized by a geometric approach: abstract shapes are complemented by elaborate zoomorphic and foliate patterns. All the vegetal and geometric themes were widespread throughout the Byzantine world; most of them, particularly the lozenges adorning the closure slabs are descended from early Christian models.[21]

The arrangement on the Athonite templa departs from the iconoclastic practice of adorning templa with images of animals and beasts still common during the 10th and 11th centuries, but also from the contemporary tendency mostly observed in Asia Minor of embellishing templa, especially epistyles, with figures of saints carved in relief or champlevé.[22] It is certain that this decorative scheme and the consistency with which it was reproduced should be attributed to a conscious choice on behalf of the founders. Given the active part played by Saint Athanasius in all stages of planning, construction and decoration of the Lavra and, possibly, the Protaton churches, the abstract character of the carved decoration was probably a decision made by the Saint at first and later reproduced by his disciples and contemporaries who founded the other monasteries. Thus, it may be concluded that Athanasius and his followers opted for austere schemes, in accordance with the ideals of monastic life, avoiding exquisite decorative patterns known from elsewhere.

The relief decoration described above was designed to enhance the entrance from the nave to the sanctuary, as well as to confer a special meaning to the structures under dis-

21. P. Niewöhner, *Mittelbyzantinische Templonanlagen aus Anatolien. Die Sammlung des Archäologischen Museums Kütahya und ihr Kontext, IstMitt 58 (2008) 285-347. Buchwald (n. 19).* C. D. Sheppard, Byzantine Carved Marble Slabs, *ArtB* 51 (1969) 65-71. D. Pallas, Παλαιοχριστιανικά θωράκια μετά ρόμβου, BCH 74 (1950) 233-249. The slabs in Vatopedi are very close to their early Christian models, unlike the ones in the other monasteries, which are typical Middle Byzantine examples.

22. C. Vanderheyde, The Carved Decoration of Middle and Late Byzantine Templa, *Mitteilungen zur spätantiken Archäologie und byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte 5* (2007) 78-80. C. Walter, A new look at the Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier, *REB* 51 (1993) 210-2. A. H. S. Megaw, The Skripou Screen, *BSA* 61 (1966) 1-33. J.-P. Sodini, Une iconostase byzantine à Xanthos, in *Actes du colloque sur la Lycie antique*, Istanbul 1982, 119-148.

cussion. The rich foliate designs painted in bright colours were intended as allusions to a rich landscape and functioned as an appropriate heavenly setting for the figural paintings and for the Divine Liturgy. In combination with its monumental appearance, the screen was meant to function as a gateway to the sanctuary. This symbolism is underlined by the theme of the arcades enclosing palmettes on the Vatopedi epistyle.[23] Furthermore, the eagles adorning the capitals of the Vatopedi templon were placed there as protectors and guardians of the entry to the sanctuary in order to emphasize the passage from the terrestrial to the celestial world.[24] The foliate decoration is complemented by the geometric decoration of the closure slabs, also enhanced by carved vegetation. Vojslav Korać has discussed this type of ornamentation and has stressed the importance geometry held in designing and executing such works, especially the slightly later chancel barrier screens in Saint Sophia in Ochrid.[25] It is therefore conceivable that the linear ornaments aimed at creating an abstract visual experience combined with the heavenly setting created by the vegetal patterns of the upper parts of the chancel screen. The Lavra closure slabs emphasize this concept with the insertion of decorative images of birds that further contribute to the sense of the celestial landscape desired.

The decoration of the marble templa should also be examined in conjunction with the overall decoration of the early monastic churches of Athos. Of course, almost nothing is known of the iconographic programs of these early churches, since their walls are covered mostly with paintings executed at later stages; thus it cannot be ascertained what kind of images accompanied the marble carvings. Recourse to contemporary monuments elsewhere can only result in conjectural hypotheses.[26] It is certain, however, that at the

23. For the symbolism of arcades on lintels, see Buchwald (n. 19) 237-241.
24. For eagles adorning entrances, see R. Wittkower, Eagle and Serpent. A Study in the Migration of Symbols, *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2 (1938-1939) 314. Ø. Hjort, “Except on Doors”: Reflexions on a curious passage in the Letter from Hypatios of Ephesus to Julian of Atramyttion, in Chr. Moss, K. Kiefer (eds), *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann,* Princeton N.J. 1995, 620-622. However, it is not impossible that the eagles were placed there as royal symbols, thus signifying links between the founders of Vatopedi and imperial personages.
25. V. Korać, Beleshka o nacinu rada vizantijskih klesara u XI veku, *Zograf* 7 (1977) 11-16.
26. Despite several attempts we are still poorly informed on the decorative layout of Athonite sanctuaries during the 10th and 11th centuries: A. Xyngopoulos, Mosaïques et fresques de l’Athos, in *Le millénaire du mont Athos, 963-1963*, 2, *Actes du “Convegno internazionale di Studio” à la “Fondazione Giorgio Cini” 3-6 septembre 1963 à Venise,* Wetteren 1964, 247-252. The recent discovery of wall paintings depicting a Deesis in the apse of the church beneath the chapel of Saint John the Baptist (possibly the original katholikon of the monastery of Klementos) in Iviron may shed some light on the issue: I. E. Tavlakis, La peinture monumentale au Mont Athos, in *Le mont Athos et l’Empire byzantin: trésors de la Sainte Montagne,* Petit Palais-Musée des beaux-arts de la Ville de Paris, Paris 2009, 39-40. Idem, P. Theocharidis, N. Merzimekis, D. Liakos, P. Fotiadis, Άγιον Όρος: από τη μονή του Κλήμεντος στη μονή των Ιβήρων. Η ιστορία ενός ναού, *20ό Συμπόσιο ΧΑΕ*, Athens 2005, 127-128. The paintings have been assigned to the late 9th or early 10th century, i.e. to a date before the installation of Saint Athanasius in the peninsula. See

time the aforementioned templa were erected they were not intended to support any icons or other painted decoration and that the openings between the columns would have provided free visual access to the sanctuary and its iconographic program. The walls of the sanctuary in the main church of Iviron were revetted with marble slabs from the beginning, but it is not impossible that the sanctuaries of the other churches of the group were adorned with wall paintings.[27] In the latter case the decoration would have consisted of the standard themes related to the Liturgy and Communion, i.e. the Virgin on the apse and the Communion of the Apostles and portraits of standing bishops on the semi-cylinder.[28] The question of the existence of veils blocking the view to the sanctuary remains open. In any case, it is possible that the Athonites would have preferred plain textiles for the purpose. An inventory, dated 1142, recording the possessions of the Athonite monastery of Xylourgos mentions the existence of such a veil as simply a βηλόθυρον τοῦ βήματος βελέσειν ἄσπρον.[29]

The carvings adorning the eastern piers of the Protaton church rank among the earliest examples of the type and prefigure what later evolved into the proskynetaria frames surrounding large mosaic panels. It is likely that even at this early stage the piers bore painted decoration and that the 13th-century panels painted over the Middle Byzantine layer reproduced more or less the same subject.[30] Thus, the subjects depicted would have been the figures of Christ and the Virgin on each pier. Very often in contemporary monuments the Virgin was represented as interceding towards Christ and it is possible that this was the content of the images in the Protaton.[31] Given the role of the church in the communal life of Athos -it served as the

also, N. Toutos, G. Fousteris, *Ευρετήριον της μνημειακής ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Όρους, 10ος-17ος αιώνας,* Athens 2010, 47-51, 65-71, 113-122, 167-174.

27. For the revetment of Iviron, see Pazaras, (n. 3 Τέμπλο Ιβήρων) 175, n. 92.

28. A. G. Mantas, *Το εικονογραφικό πρόγραμμα του Ιερού Βήματος των μεσοβυζαντινών ναών της Ελλάδος (843-1204)*, Athens 2001, 125-59, 225-227. S. E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the sacred mysteries: programs of the Byzantine sanctuary,* Seattle, London 1999.

29. P. Lemerle, G. Dagron, S. Ćirković, *Actes de Saint-Pantéléèmon*, Paris 1982, 74. This evidently referred to a curtain hanging on the doorway leading to the sanctuary. Thomas Mathews questions the accepted view that veils were commonly used in Constantinopolitan sanctuaries: T. F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople. Architecture and liturgy,* University Park, PA, 1971, 168-171. It seems, however, that curtains were drawn at least during recitation of the Anaphora. See also Walter (n. 22) 204. R. F. Taft, The Decline of Communion in Byzantium and the Distancing of the Congregation from the Liturgical Action: Cause, Effect or Neither?, in Gerstel (n. 9) 40-49. However, an embroidered iconostasis curtain was donated to Hilandar monastery at the end of the 14th century. The decoration consists of the figure of Christ the Archpriest flanked by saints Basil and John Chrysostom: S. Smolić-Makuljević, Hilandarska katapetazma monahije Jefimije, in V. Korać (ed.), *Huit siècles du monastère de Chilandar. Colloque scientifique international, Belgrade, octobre 1998,* Belgrade 2000, 693-701.

30. For the Late Byzantine decoration of the piers attributed to Manuel Panselinos, see Teteriatnikov (n. 9) 101-125. The present wooden templa in the other churches hinder any attempt to further clarify the matter.

31. Kalopissi (n. 9) 118-122.

premises of the Assembly of representatives of the monasteries of the peninsula and as the main church for the entire surrounding monastic community[32]- one can imagine the effect the subject would have produced by exhibiting the Virgin interceding towards Christ for the benefit of the entire monastic community. The arched frames painted in bright colours and carved with elaborate vegetal motifs would have highlighted the images by placing the figures within the celestial sphere and emphasized the message they conveyed. It is possible that an analogous decorative scheme was reproduced on the eastern piers of the main church in Vatopedi: although no traces of it are discernible, the attachment of slabs at the lower part of the piers in the Vatopedi church in combination with the continuous lintel above would have also created the impression of frames surrounding images.[33] Thus, the Athonite examples together with those in Hosios Loukas represent an early stage of the development of the proskynetarion icon and its frame, a practice that appears consolidated by the 12th century, as for example in the church of Saint Panteleimon in Nerezi. The origin of this development is most likely due to the dependence on common Constantinopolitan models.[34]

The relief decoration of the Athonite sanctuary barriers was also related to other reliefs within the monuments in question. Once again, the Vatopedi templon offers itself as the most characteristic example. A simple look at the axonometric plan provided by Pazaras to accompany his reconstruction of the sculpted ornament of the monasterys main church suffices to show that the templon reliefs were envisaged as part of a coherent decorative plan encompassing the entire building and perfectly integrated into the general architectural planning.[35] The vegetal subjects are meticulously repeated on the doorframes of both narthexes and on various other parapet slabs within the church. Moreover, the sanctuary barrier is the exact parallel of the reliefs adorning the entrance to the outer narthex (the *lite*) in terms of structure and decorative layout. This analogy

32. K. Chrysochoidis, Πρωτάτο. Το κέντρο του αθωνικού μοναχισμού, in *Κειμήλια Πρωτάτου*, 1, Mount Athos 2000, 19-28. D. Papachryssanthou, *Ο Αθωνικός Μοναχισμός. Αρχές και Οργάνωση*, Athens 1992, 299.
33. Pazaras has hypothesized that the same disposition may have occurred in the slightly later sanctuary barrier in the main church of Docheiariou monastery: Th. Pazaras, Τα Βυζαντινά Γλυπτά, in *Παρουσία Μονής Δοχειαρίου*, Mount Athos 2001, 344, dr. 2. Even in the other churches, however, there could have been painted frames imitating the carved ones, as indicated by other examples: Kalopissi (n. 9) 113. Efthymios Tsigaridas has attributed a large icon with the Virgin and Child, dated to the late 13th or early 14th century, to one of the eastern piers. In this case, the slabs and the epistyle would actually have functioned as a frame: E. Tsigaridas, Φορητές εικόνες, in *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Παράδοση, ιστορία, τέχνη*, Mount Athos 1996, 373. However, this possibility cannot be proved or excluded, nor can it be verified whether similar icons were attached to the walls during the Middle Byzantine period as well.
34. The examples of the Protaton and Hosios Loukas probably reflect contemporary structures in Constantinople. The earliest Constantinopolitan examples are the carved frames in the Kyriotissa monastery, dated to the 12th century: C. Striker, D. Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul*, Mainz 1997, 104.
35. Pazaras (n. 6) 17, dr. 3.

is obviously a conscious choice and aims to present both ensembles as screens marking two equivalent entrances: that to the church and the one to the sanctuary. The latters monumental character was emphasized by its solemn structure, as well as by the antique columns. The slabs attributed by Voyatzis to the west side of the lite in the Lavra, which is now destroyed,[36] seem to preserve similar relationships to the churchs chancel screen.

Of course, the Lavra, Vatopedi and Iviron outer narthexes were most likely later additions, but the iconographic and stylistic resemblances with the corresponding templa indicate that these additions took place only a few years later than the original construction of each of the three churches. Their completion evidently entailed the reproduction of the reliefs of the sanctuary barrier on the west façade in order to underline the importance of the entrance to the building. Thus, the templon, the entrance door frames and the marble screen adorning the west facades delimit the entry to three successive zones within the monastic churches and reflect the gradual passage through various degrees of the church's holy space from the narthex to the sanctuary.[37]

The carving style of the marble sanctuary barriers of the three great monasteries and of the Protaton church is also fairly uniform. For example, the method of marking the three-strand ribbon defining the lozenges is common on all four templa examined. The precision of the design, the stylized abstract form of the vegetal patterns rendered thanks to the crisp carving and the well-organized compositions are elements comparable to works from the major centres of Middle Byzantine sculpture, Constantinople and Thessaloniki.[38] Despite the domination of two-dimensional relief, the Protaton, Vatopedi and Lavra closure slabs, as well as the Vatopedi lintel exhibit some more advanced techniques: undercutting is used extensively to produce concave ornaments, especially rosettes, and, instead of using the drill as the sole means to mark a knot, the chisel is carefully applied to produce the illusion of overlapping bands defining geometric shapes. The capitals of Vatopedi surpass their counterparts in splendour and decorative richness. Whereas in the Protaton the compact capitals bear highly stylized acanthus leaves formed by abstract shapes, the high relief of the eagles adorning the Vatopedi capitals, in combination with the relatively soft modelling of the almost three-dimensional robust bodies, is reminiscent of the early 10th-century sculpture of the monastery of Lips in Constantinople and ranks these works among the finest examples of Middle Byzantine marble carving.[39] Thus, it is very possible that especially the Lavra and Vatopedi epistyles and closure slabs were executed by carvers from the Byzantine capital. In contrast to these examples, the fragments from the Iviron templon are characterized by a certain flatness in the rendering of the vegetal and geometric motifs.

36. Voyatzis (n. 4) 26-27. For the outer narthex, see Steppan (n. 12) 101-102.
37. Kalopissi (n. 9) 123-132.
38. Sheppard (n. 21) 69-71.
39. T. Macridy, The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi, *DOP* 18 (1964) 262, pl. 31. The stylistic affinities between the Vatopedi reliefs and Constantinopolitan monuments have been noted by Theocharis Pazaras: Pazaras (n. 3 Τέμπλο Βατοπεδίου) 30-31.

This flatness is coupled with a minor tendency to produce less strict compositions, slightly asymmetrical in relation to the other two examples.

Stylistic analysis is not helpful in dating the sanctuary barriers with precision or in establishing a convincing chronology of the order in which they were completed. Comparison with dated parallels from outside Athos offers a range of approximately a century within which the Athonite templa can be placed. They can date from as early as the settlement of Saint Athanasius in the peninsula in the early 960s until the middle of the 11th century when the stylistically related reliefs, especially the closure slabs, of the church of Saint Sophia in Kiev were executed by Constantinopolitan carvers.[40] This chronological span can be extended to 1063/64, the year when the templon epistyle discovered in Sohut Kasaba in Phrygia was created, according to its inscription. The latter work, as well as a lintel from Manisa (Magnesia ad Sipylum) display similarities with the Athonite lintels, especially in terms of decorative layout and precise deep carving. A 10th-century slab of Constantinopolitan origin immured in San Marco in Venice is a very close parallel to the slabs in the Lavra.[41] However, the best way to proceed with a more exact dating is by taking into account the construction history of the respective churches. Although the architectural chronology of the four churches is far from certain and many issues remain open to interpretation, some observations can be mentioned here in order to facilitate the discussion. Moreover, combining the archaeological record with the available textual evidence also illuminates many parameters of the problem, since contemporary sources clarify the relationships between the monasteries founders, which in turn provide the framework for the links between the monuments visual aspects.

The Vita of Saint Athanasius records that the Saint built the main church of the Lavra between 962 and 964;[42] according to the monograph by Thomas Steppan dealing with the monuments architecture, this was a cross-in-square church that was enlarged by 972.[43] The so-called *Hypotyposis* of the Lavra, written between 964 and 973 (probably by 964) by Athanasius himself in order to prescribe the basic cenobitic and liturgical rules to be observed in the monastery, clearly mentions the existence of the sanctuary barrier, which is defined as a *κιγκλὶς*.[44] Meanwhile, recent archaeological research has established that the Protaton church was built by Athanasius between 964 and 969 and that it was the only basilican church of the group.[45] There is nothing to indicate that any

40. Sheppard (n. 21) 70.
41. W. H. Buckler, W. M. Calder, W. K. C. Guthrie, *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua,* 4, Manchester 1933, 32, no. 95. Buchwald (n. 19) 262. Sodini (n. 22) 131-136. Sheppard (n. 21) 69.
42. J. Noret, *Vitae duae antiquae sancti Athanasii Athonitae*, Turnhout 1982, 35-38, 149-153.
43. Steppan (n. 12) 108-110. For the construction history proposed by Mylonas, see P. Mylonas, Le plan initial du catholicon de la Grande-Lavra au Mont Athos et la genèse du type du catholicon athonite, *CahArch* 32 (1984) 89-112.
44. Meyer (n. 15) 131: "πρῶτον τὸ ἱερὸν βῆμα, κἀκεῖθεν λαμπάδος προπορευομένης διὰ τῆς ἔμπροσθεν κιγκλίδος."
45. P. G. Fountas, Το Πρωτάτο του Αγίου Αθανασίου, αναπαράσταση Ν όψης, *Μακεδονικά* 31 (1997-1998) 417-419. D. Ambonis, Στοιχεία οικοδομικής ιστορίας του ιερού ναού του

additional work was conducted on the site before the 13th century and thus the templon should be placed within these five years.

The katholikon of Iviron was built at the initiative of Athanasius' Georgian disciples John and Euthymios: according to the Vita of John and Euthymios corroborated by archival evidence, the church was constructed between 980 and 982.[46] The chronology of construction in Iviron remains somewhat obscure, but recent studies maintain that it was constructed in one phase, based on the similarities with Vatopedi, which is certain to have been completed in one phase. The only secure clue concerning the chronology of the templon is the date of the *opus sectile* pavement installed during the term of Abbot George I, i.e. between 1019 and 1029: the designers of the floor have taken into consideration the stylobate of the templon, which means that the latter was already in place by that time.[47] The sources describe continuous building and rebuilding in Iviron throughout the first century of its history and the main church seems to have been a large construction site during all this time.[48] Thus, the sanctuary barrier may be assigned to any year before 1019, although the evidence from the other monasteries indicates that the sanctuary barrier was a primary concern of founders and that it must have been conceived and completed from the beginning, i.e. in the 980s.

Although no texts concerning the foundation of Vatopedi survive, it is generally assumed that it took place between 972 and 985; in fact, the editors of the monastery's archives seem to prefer a date in the early 980s which would make the building almost contemporary to that of Iviron.[49] The architectural history of the Vatopedi katholikon is sufficiently studied: it has been demonstrated that it was built from the beginning as a triconch, i.e. the type which later became known as the "Athonite" plan.[50] The analysis of the carved decoration of the Vatopedi sanctuary barrier, especially in combination with the rest of the architectural sculpture in the same monument, has revealed that all the reliefs in the church were executed in one stage that should be considered contemporary

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Πρωτάτου, in *Μανουήλ Πανσέληνος εκ του Ιερού Ναού του Πρωτάτου,* Thessaloniki 2003, 71-80. The older views expressed by Pavlos Mylonas are no longer accepted by Fountas and Ambonis: P. M. Mylonas, Les étapes successives de construction du Protaton au Mont Athos, *CahArch* 28 (1979) 143-160.

46. J. Lefort, N. Oikonomides, D. Papachryssanthou, H. Métrévéli, *Actes d'Iviron,* 1, Paris 1985, 24-5. B. Martin-Hisard, La Vie de Jean et Euthyme et le statut du monastère des Ibères sur l'Athos, *REB* 49 (1991) 91-93. Mamaloukos (n. 12) 286-287. Steppan (n. 12) 124-125. See also P. Mylonas, Notice sur le Katholikon d'Iviron, in Lefort, Oikonomides, Papachryssanthou, Métrévéli, op. cit, 64-8.
47. Pazaras, (n. 3 Τέμπλο Ιβήρων) 176.
48. Martin-Hisard (n. 18) 138-139.
49. J. Bompaire, J. Lefort, V. Kravari, Ch. Giros, *Actes de Vatopédi*, 1, Paris 2001, 9.
50. Mamaloukos (n. 12) 118-119, 204-205. Idem, The buildings of Vatopedi and their patrons, in A. Bryer, M. Cunningham (eds), *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism. Papers from the Twenty-eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1994*, Aldershot 1996, 113-119. Mamaloukos has dated the building to the end of the 10th century.

to the erection of the building, i.e. around the end of the 10th century.[51] To conclude, the Lavra and Protaton templa are works of the 960s and are due to the initiatives of Athanasius, whereas the Iviron and Vatopedi screens date from the 980s or 990s and were commissioned by the other founders.

None of the early templa is accompanied by inscriptions revealing their patrons or any other potential information concerning their erection. These were integral parts of the original buildings and closely connected to the revered founders, so that it was unnecessary to advertise their construction with inscriptions.[52] Their importance as one of the main focal points of the churches interior decoration rendered them a priority during planning and completion. During the Liturgy, the glances of the monks would naturally be continuously directed towards the sanctuary and its marble screen. By ensuring that both the Protaton and the Lavra churches were equipped with marble chancel screens in line with the most advanced developments in contemporary church planning already during the 960s, Athanasius was implementing his general plan of constructing monastic churches to serve as the centre of cenobitic life in the Athonite peninsula.[53] These actions are perfectly in line with his insistence on the importance of attending offices as a crucial part of cenobitic life, as described in detail in both versions of his Vita and in his own writings regulating communal life.[54] Athanasius' ideas on liturgical life were not a novelty in 10th century Byzantium; on the contrary he was merely implementing the practices prescribed by the Constantinopolitan Studite rule to his newly founded monastic centre.[55] It thus appears that in terms of church planning for liturgical purposes, he was similarly importing the practices prevalent in the great monastic centres of Constantinople, with which he was very familiar from

51. Pazaras, (n. 3 Τέμπλο Βατοπεδίου) 26-28.
52. In contrast, the successors of the founders, in their attempt to consolidate the monastic tradition of their establishments and perpetuate the achievements of the first *ktetors*, were much more apt to exhibit their patronage and advertise it with inscriptions. This was the case with additions carried out in the course of the 11th century by successor abbots, such as George the Iberian, who completed the opus sectile pavement in the katholikon of Iviron, and the abbot John of Lavra, who constructed the fountain house in the latter monastery, both at a stage posterior to the edification of the churches, and added the appropriate inscriptions commemorating their activity. See G. Millet, J. Pargoire, L. Petit, *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de l'Athos,* Paris 1904, 70-71 (no. 231) 107-108 (no. 333). Elsewhere, inscriptions of patrons on templa are very common. See G. Pallis, Μεσοβυζαντινά ενεπίγραφα τέμπλα, *29ο Συμπόσιο ΧΑΕ*, Athens 2009, 88-89.
53. J. Leroy, La conversion de Saint Athanase l'Athonite à l'idéal cénobitique et l'influence studite, in *Le millénaire du Mont Athos. 963-1963. Études et Mélanges*, 1, Wetteren 1963, 101-120. Παπαχρυσάνθου (n. 32) 262-268. N. Oikonomides, Ο Άθως και το στουδιτικό πρότυπο κοινοβίου, in *Το Άγιον Όρος. Χθες-σήμερα-αύριο, Θεσσαλονίκη, 29 Οκτωβρίου-1 Νοεμβρίου 1993*, Thessaloniki 1996, 239-245. K. Chrysochoidis, Dalle'ermo al cenobio: storia e tradizioni delle origini del monachesimo athonita, in S. Chialà, L. Cremaschi (eds), *Atanasio e il monachesimo al Monte Athos, Bose, 12-14 settembre 2004*, Bose 2004, 27-45.
54. Noret (n. 42) 39-40, 153-154. Meyer (n. 15) 130-140.
55. R. F. Taft, Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the Byzantine Rite, *DOP* 42 (1988) 182-187.

personal experience, since he was raised and educated in the capital.[56] After the rules regulating communal life in the Monastery and the architectural disposition were established, it is obvious that they were copied by the founders and builders of subsequent monasteries.[57]

Unfortunately, we are very poorly informed about the form of Constantinopolitan templa of the 10th century; our knowledge is based on speculation and on the evidence from works derived from the art of the capital in Greece and in Asia Minor. Among monastic churches outside Athos, those of Hosios Loukas in central Greece are probably the best parallels to the model described (fig. 13). The decoration is richer than that of the Athonite examples and the style is only remotely related to the latter, but the general concept is similar: columns supporting an epistyle, crowned by a cornice at Hosios Loukas, and closure slabs blocking the entrance -but not the view- to the sanctuary. The carved proskynetaria frames are closely related to those in the Protaton. The decoration consists mainly of vegetal patterns and animal figures, just like on Mount Athos. Although other iconographic traditions were current in Asia Minor at the same time, namely the inclusion of sacral figures on the epistyles or fictional apotropaic beasts on the closure slabs, the basic concept of a monumental colonnade was the same.[58]

The evidence from Early Christian churches in Constantinople still in use after Iconoclasm offers additional insight, although it is often overlooked. Monuments, such as the church of Saint Euphemia, had preserved their colonnaded templa until the period under discussion. These were not merely antecedents of the Middle Byzantine sanctuary barriers; they were also standing visual examples at the disposal of patrons and constructors for imitation and variation. The church of the Stoudios monastery itself was one of these examples: its Early Christian sanctuary barrier, whose fragments have been discovered during excavations on the site, seems to have been in place during the 10th century.[59] The monumental appearance and the closure slabs decorated with the typical Early Christian lozenges must have exerted some influence on the Middle Byzantine sanctuary barriers, including those in the Athonite monuments, given the strong impact of the Stoudios monastery, especially in matters connected with the liturgy.

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56. P. Lemerle, La vie ancienne de saint Athanase l'Athonite composée au début du XIe siècle par Athanase de Lavra, in *Le millénaire* (n. 53) 68-71. See also A. Laiou, The General and the Saint: Michael Maleinos and Nikephoros Phokas, in *Ευψυχία. Mélanges offerts à Hélène Arwheiler*, 2, Paris 1998, 399-412.
57. Interestingly, the Georgian monks also adapted the Constantinopolitan chancel screen. Although chancel screens appear in Georgia occasionally, the sanctuaries of many great cathedrals in the Iberians' homeland were completely open: A. Alpago-Novello, V. Beridze, J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Art and Architecture in Medieval Georgia*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1988, 250, 273-279, 362-326, 328-331.
58. Sodini (n. 22) 119-131.
59. Mathews (n. 29) 23-27, 65-67. Examination of the Middle Byzantine pavement in the church has shown that the original sanctuary barrier (and its stylobate) had remained intact until the installation of the pavement in the 11th century.

The interior of the Athonite churches would certainly have made a strong impact on the monks, who were their principal viewers. As the analysis of the decorative themes, style, form, and layout of the templa demonstrated, the marble decoration was clearly designed and installed in order to confer upon the monuments an appearance reminiscent of Constantinopolitan architecture. The austere simplicity of the abstract decorative themes, the special connotations of marble as a material symbolizing wealth and luxury, the dexterous handling of the carved ornaments as well as the monumental character of the structure with its antique columns and elaborate carvings would all have contributed to a grandiose effect to anyone entering the monuments and attending services, especially amidst the hermitic environment of 10th-century Athos. The sources mention that very quickly the monastic communities came to include tens of monks (the presumed chryssobull on the foundation of the Lavra mentions 80 monks in the 960s and the number had augmented by the reign of John I Tzimiskes) of varied geographic and social origin.[60] Among the viewers of the sanctuary barriers were also high-ranking state and Church officials from Constantinople who would certainly be familiar with the visual result produced by the marble revetment and arcade-like chancel screen.[61] In short, this appearance would reinforce the assertion of Constantinopolitan and Studite cenobitic influence on the great establishments of hitherto hermitic Mount Athos.

The early templa of Mount Athos very quickly became the standard mode of templa in the peninsula, obviously due to the elevated prestige of the great monasteries and their founders. Fragments of approximately contemporary sanctuary barriers adhering to the same norms have been found in other Athonite monasteries. Their importance for the study of Athonite sculpture and architecture is enhanced by the fact that in some cases they are the only surviving witnesses of buildings no longer extant. The main church of Hilandar is a building of the 12th century, but analysis of its templon reveals that it must have belonged to the original foundation, dating probably to the early 11th century, since it resembles the above in both structural and stylistic terms.[62] Although not much is known of the monastery's original founder, George Chelandaris, who established it shortly after 982, the chancel screen is a clear reflection of the abundant financial resources at his disposal.[63] According to Pazaras, the templon fragments in Docheiariou monastery should be attributed to the original katholikon, built around the middle of the 11th century.[64] The sanctuary barrier in question conformed to the established pattern, in terms of its construction principles, but its iconography is more

60. Meyer (n. 15) 106. P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos, *Actes de Lavra*, 1, Paris 1970, 16.
61. Noret (n. 42) 176-147.
62. S. Nenadović, Arhitektura Hilandara Crkve i paraklisi, *HilZb* 3 (1974) 137-138.
63. For the history of the monastery prior to the settlement of the Serbian community, see M. Zivojinović, V. Kravari, Ch. Giros, *Actes de Chilandar*, Paris 1998, 18-20. Papachryssanthou (n. 32) 249-250.
64. The components of the sanctuary barrier were later reused in the church built by the monastery's second founder Neophytos: Pazaras (n. 33) 359-360.

advanced. Apart from the usual abstract foliate and geometric motifs, one of the closure slabs bears a large-scale representation of an eagle and another is decorated with the scene of the Ascension of Alexander the Great.[65] The templon in the main church of Xenophontos monastery, another similar example of the type, is even later: it has been dated to the last decades of the 11th century and is still in place, behind the 17th-century wooden iconostasis (fig. 11).[66]

Marble fragments from sanctuary barriers provide valuable evidence concerning the form and existence of other early Athonite monasteries, including some that have disappeared. The sanctuary barrier once installed in the monastery of the Amalfitans cannot be reconstructed with certainty, since the church has not survived and very few marble remains can be attributed to it, but the available evidence suggests that it followed the above model.[67] Excavations at the site of the early monastery of Zygos also yielded fragments of a templon consisting of an epistyle and Early Christian closure slabs.[68] Similar marble templa, albeit of smaller dimensions, were installed in minor churches of the time, as for example chapels or burial churches within the great monasteries or church buildings of minor monasteries. The main difference in relation to the monumental examples described above is the reduction in the size of closure slabs, obviously due to the smaller dimensions of the corresponding buildings. For example, the chapel of Saint Nicholas in Vatopedi is furnished with a reduced version of the templon in the monastery's main church (fig. 12).[69] Other examples include the templon components from the burial church of the Lavra, the church of Saint John Chrysostom in the same monastery, the church of the so-called monastery of Saravares, the church of the monastery of Rabdouchos and the chapel of the Forty Martyrs in Docheiariou monastery, all of which have been dated to the 11th century; their decoration follows the same layout principles and exhibits the same selection of ornamental motifs as their models.[70]

65. Both subjects aim to emphasize the passage to the celestial world. In fact, the image of the eagle is an advanced reproduction of the eagles on the templon capitals of the Vatopedi templon.

66. Th. Pazaras, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος του Παλαιού Καθολικού της Μονής Ξενοφώντος στο Άγιον Όρος, *ΔΧΑΕ* περ. Δ΄, 14 (1987-1988) 33-47.

67. P. Androudis, Γύρω από κάποια μεσοβυζαντινά τέμπλα του Αγίου Όρους, in Pennas, Vanderheyde (n. 17) 263-265.

68. I. Papangelos, Τα μαρμάρινα διάστυλα και το τέμπλο του καθολικού της αθωνικής μονής του Ζυγού, *28ο Συμπόσιο ΧΑΕ*, Athens 2008, 68-69. Idem, *Η αθωνική μονή του Ζυγού*, Thessaloniki 2005, 22-25.

69. Pazaras (n. 6) 89-93. For the chapel, see Mamaloukos (n. 12) 92-102, 196-200, 207.

70. Androudis (n. 67) 265-283. Idem, *Les églises cimeteriales monastiques du Mont Athos: Contribution à l'étude des églises funéraires byzantines et post-byzantines des monastères de la Sainte Montagne (Hagion Oros, Grèce)* Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, Thèse à la carte, Lille 1997, 19. Th. Pazaras, Βυζαντινά γλυπτά από το κελί του Ραβδούχου στο Άγιον Όρος, in G. Karadedos (ed.), *Δώρον. Τιμητικός Τόμος στον Καθηγητή Νίκο Νικονάνο*, Thessaloniki 2006, 135-146. Idem (n. 33) 345-346. A. Papazotos, Η μονή του Σαράβαρη στο Άγιον Όρος. Ιστορικές και αρχαιολογικές μαρτυρίες, *Κληρονομία* 12 (1980) 85-94. P. Mylonas, Two Middle-Byzantine Churches on Athos, in *XVe Congrès international des études byzantines, Athènes, Septembre 1976*, 2, Athens 1981, 545-559.

Stylistically, the templa from the minor monasteries are generally characterized by less precise carving and appear rather provincial in relation to their counterparts from the great monastic churches.[71] What is noteworthy is the continuous presence in the peninsula of skilled carvers throughout the first half of the 11th century following the initial impetus of the 10th century. It is possible that the earliest templa were executed by sculptors hired from Constantinople aided by disciples or apprentices and that the latter remained in Athos in order to fulfil the growing demand for marble furnishings caused by the increased number of monastic institutions.[72] This would explain the inferior style of the slightly later examples and the fact that the artistic achievements of the first templa were never matched by subsequent monuments.

The early Athonite templa preserved their importance throughout the peninsula's Byzantine period, partly because they remained in place for several centuries and continued to receive the attention of those within the church. Their original form represents a relatively early stage of the evolution of the Middle Byzantine sanctuary barrier, at which stage it had not yet acquired the enhanced role conferred by the addition of painted epistyle beams and intercolumnar icons, as illustrated by later examples throughout the Byzantine world.[73] Analysis of this process as it occurred in the Athonite monuments is a complicated task that forms the subject of a separate study, but it is worth providing an outline of the development here, since it illustrates the importance of the early templa for subsequent developments. Two painted wooden epistyles from Athonite monasteries have been identified as additions to marble architraves: one from the Lavra (of which a section is preserved in Saint Petersburg) and one from Vatopedi: both are decorated with narrative scenes from the standard Feast Cycle and the latter includes a representation of the Deesis as well.[74] In fact, drill holes were made in the marble lintel of Vatopedi during the 12th century, evidently for attaching the wooden panel in question.[75]

Tracing the appearance of icons in the intercolumnar spaces is impossible, since relative allusions in the sources are too vague and, if they existed, they were probably mova-

71. The carvings from the monastery of Saravares are an exception: they can be compared to the style of the Vatopedi work.
72. Some of the carvers could have been monks. See Bouras (n. 17) 544-545.
73. A. Wharton-Epstein, The Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier: *Templon* or Iconostasis?, *JBAA* 134 (1981) 1-28. Walter (n. 22) 212-218.
74. E. N. Tsigaridas, K. Loverdou-Tsiagarida, *Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου. Βυζαντινές εικόνες και επενδύσεις*, Mount Athos 2006, 41-68. M. Χατζηδάκης, Εικόνες επιστυλίου από το Άγιον Όρος, *ΔΧΑΕ* περ. Δ΄, 4 (1964-65) 377-403. V. Lazarev, Trois fragments d'épistyles peints et le *templon* byzantin, *ΔΧΑΕ* περ. Δ΄, 4 (1964-1965) 117-119. The evidence indicates that the aforementioned evolution took place in the Lavra and in Vatopedi almost simultaneously.
75. Pazaras, (n. 3 Τέμπλο Βατοπεδίου) 26. A wooden beam decorated with painted geometric motifs was also added to the 11th-century templon of Xenophontos: *Ιερά Μονή Ξενοφώντος: εικόνες*, Mount Athos 1998, 237.

ble.[76] According to examples known from elsewhere, they usually conversed with or even repeated the imagery on the piers flanking the entrance to the sanctuary. It appears that some of the mosaic icons still preserved in Athonite monasteries were associated with the sanctuary barrier; they were either attached to it or placed near it, occasionally on stands.[77] The large-scale icons in Xenophontos monastery, depicting Saint George and saint Demetrius, have been identified with those imported from Constantinople in the late 11th century, as mentioned in a document dated 1089 in the monastery's archives.[78] In this case, they would have adorned the 11th-century marble sanctuary barrier. Painted icons have also been attributed to various Athonite marble templa.[79]

Additions to the sanctuary barriers also included the provision of doors set in the central entrance to the sanctuary. The earliest examples are those in the Protaton and in Hilandar, dated probably to the 12th century, and consisted of ivory panels attached to wooden doors.[80] The doors attributed to the templon of Vatopedi, dated to c. 1200, bear the scene of the Annunciation, as do the Palaiologan examples in Lavra, Simonopetra and Docheiariou.[81] The subject is a direct allusion to the Incarnation and its re-enactment during Eucharist and is thus better related to the iconography of the sanctuary than to the other components of the barrier.[82] Finally, large cruciform icons with painted decoration

76. Walter (n. 22) 212-214. M. Chatzidakis, L'évolution de l'icône aux 11e-13e siècles et la transformation du templon, in *XVe Congrès International* (n. 70) 3, Athens 1976, 182-188.

77. G. Tavlakis, Οι ψηφιδωτές εικόνες, in *Ξενοφώντος: εικόνες* (n. 75) 49-59. O. Demus, *Die Byzantinischen Mosaikikonen,* 1, Wienna 1991, 19-22, 26-28. The inventory of the monastery of Xylourgou (dated 1142) explicitly mentions the existence of templon icons: "τέμπλων … ἔχον τὰς δεσποτικὰς ἑορτὰς" [Lemerle, Dagron, Ćirković, (n. 29) 74]. The evidence from *Typika* of Middle Byzantine monasteries outside Athos is examined in C. Barber, The monastic typikon for art historians, in M. Mullet, A, Kirby (eds), *The Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism*, Belfast 1994, 200-203.

78. A deed issued by the Protos Paul in July 1089 describes the restoration of the monastery by its second founder Symeon and mentions the importation of icons from Constantinople: "εἰκόνες καινούργιαι παρ᾽αὐτοῦ γεγονυῖε καὶ κόσμω ἀργυροχρύσω κοσμηθεῖσαι πέντε, τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τῆς ὑπεράγνου αὐτοῦ μητρὸς καὶ Θεομήτορος, τῶν ἐν μάρτυσι περιβοήτων Γεωργίου τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ Δημητρίου τοῦ μεγάλου, καὶ αὖ ἕτερον μικρὸν εἰς προσκύνησιν ἐν τῆ μνήμη κείμενον εἰκόνα φέρον τοῦ παμμεγίστου καὶ τροπαιοφόρου Γεωργίου" (D. Papachryssanthou, *Actes de Xénophon*, Paris 1986, 72).

79. Tsigaridas (n. 33) 364-365. S. Petcović, *Εικόνες Ιεράς Μονής Χιλανδαρίου*, Mount Athos 1997, 24. For the 14th-century alterations to the templon of Hilandar, see S. Djurić, Icons from the 12th to the 17th centuries, in G. Subotić (ed.), *Hilandar monastery*, Belgrade 1998, 284.

80. P. Papadimitriou, *Εξέλιξη του τύπου και της εικονογραφίας του βημόθυρου από τον 10ο έως και τον 18ο αιώνα,* Thessaloniki 2008, 89-100. B. Pittarakis, G. Oikonomaki-Papadopoulou, *Κοσμητικές τέχνες*, in *Κειμήλια Πρωτάτου* (n. 32) 45-49.

81. Papadimitriou, op. cit., 112-117. The Annunciation occupies a central position in the Protaton and Hilandar doors as well.

82. Walter (n. 22) 223-224. A. Grabar, Deux notes sur l'histoire de l'iconostase d'après des monuments de Yougoslavie, *ZRVI* 7 (1961) 13-22.

were ultimately placed on top of the templon lintels above the entrance to the Bema, such as the one in Iviron monastery, dated to 1525.[83]

Similar evidence of this evolution is recorded in Constantinople and in Asia Minor during the 12th century,[84] but the best examples of templon beams are the numerous oblong panels added to several chapels in the monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai.[85] Their main themes, i.e. representations of Feast days and variations of the Deesis, indicate that they were installed by lay patrons, as demonstrated by Christopher Walter: the aim of the narrative scenes was to remind the audiences of Feast Days, whereas the Deesis was intended to receive the prayers of those attending the Liturgy towards the Virgin and Saint John, imploring them for their intercession to Christ for salvation.[86] It appears that developments on Athos reflect a similar plan and that the invasion of the sanctuary barrier by such subjects (i.e. without liturgical content) was connected to parallel circumstances like those on Sinai: they thus reflect the rise of Athos as a pilgrimage centre during the 12th century, attracting prominent visitors and their patronage. Although we are not well informed about pilgrimage and patronage on Athos in the 12th century, the importance of the community appears as a consolidated tradition by the end of the century, when, according to the biographer of Saint Saba of Serbia, the royal Saint toured the monasteries of the peninsula and donated several works of art to them.[87] The existence of icons on stands for veneration -sometimes close to the sanctuary- is also a clear indication of an elevated level of active piety associated with the Athonite sanctuary barriers and probably related to pilgrimage on Mount Athos.[88] Thus, a 15th-century monk or visitor, such as Cyriac of Ancona, would have ex-

83. Chatzidakis (n. 76) 179-180. Pazaras, (n. 3 Τέμπλο Ιβήρων) 170. The earliest example on Mount Athos is the painted cross added to the Late Byzantine templon of Pantocrator in the early 15th century: T. Papamastorakis, Εικόνες 13ου-16ου αι., in *Εικόνες Μονής Παντοκράτορος*, Mount Athos 1998, 74-81.

84. A document from 1202 records that the marble lintel of a sanctuary barrier in Constantinople was surmounted by a wooden gilded beam: F. Miklosich, J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, 3, Wienna 1860, 55. The 11th century marble epistyle discovered in the church at Xanthos in Lycia exhibits traces of nails for attaching a beam: Sodini (n. 22) 131.

85. Chatzidakis (n.76) 169-179. K. Weitzmann, Icon programs of the 12th and 13th centuries at Sinai, *ΔΧΑΕ* περ. Δ΄, 12 (1984) 64-86.

86. Walter (n. 22) 223. J.-M. Spieser, Le développement du templon et les images des Douze Fêtes, in J.-Cl. Schmitt, J.-M. Sansterre (eds), *Les images dans les sociétés médiévales pour une histoire comparée. Actes du colloque organisé à l'Academia Belgica, Rome, 19-20 juin 1998*, Rome 1999, 131-164.

87. B. Miljković, *Zitija svetog Save kao izbori za istoriju srednobekovne umetnosti*, Belgrade 2008, 33-110. D. Danicić, *Zivot svetoga Simeuna i svetoga Save*, Belgrade 1865, 154-160. Miljković believes that the fragments from a painted epistyle fragment depicting the Nativity and the Last Supper in Vatopedi were donated by Saint Savas specifically for the churchs templon. He also attributes the Bema doors of the Protaton and Hilandar churches to the patronage of Savas.

88. See for example K. Chrisochoidis, Το Άξιον Εστίν. Ιστορία-Λατρεία, in Idem, G. Tavlakis, G. Oikonomaki, (eds), *Το Άξιον Εστίν. Παναγία η Καρυώτισσα. Η εφέστια εικόνα του Πρωτάτου,* Mount Athos 1999, 7-17.

perienced a visual result radically different than that produced by the original structures: the solemn marble screens had been loaded with multiple images, as a result of continuous donations by private patrons, pilgrims to the Holy Mountain.

The story of the Athonite marble sanctuary barriers ends with their displacement by the wood carved iconostases in the post-Byzantine period.[89] Fragments preserved in the sacristy of the 14th-century monastery of Pantocrator imply that its Late Byzantine main church may have also been adorned with a marble templon reproducing Middle Byzantine models, but this proved to be the last of a series extending over four centuries.[90] Wood-carved chancel screens began to appear at about the same time[91] and by the 17th-century they became the rule adopted by most monastic churches of the community. In 1611 a wooden iconostasis was installed in the Protaton church, although the Byzantine templon remained in place, concealed behind the 17th-century structure. Five years later a similar work was added to Vatopedi in an identical fashion.[92] These screens loaded with icons radically transformed the appearance of their Middle Byzantine monuments by obstructing any view towards the sanctuary and producing a more illusionist and mystical aesthetic result. Alexei Lidov has demonstrated that the 14th-century Hesychast climate of Athos heavily influenced the development of a well-organized iconographic scheme that dictated the distribution of each subject within the layout of these templa.[93] Thus, it appears that although Hesychasm did not have an immediate impact on the form of the iconostasis in the 14th century, its ideas gradually influenced both the form and function of the chancel barrier, but this evolution is first visible outside Athos (for example in various Balkan territories and in Russia). Over the years these screens were imitated throughout the Orthodox world and had a great impact on the development of the sanctuary barrier. Thus, Athos was transformed from a province importing and reproducing Constantinopolitan practices to an international centre generating and exporting original forms.[94]

89. M. Ljubinković, Duborezni ikonostasi XVII veka na svetoj gori, *HilZb* 1 (1966) 119-134. K. Καλοκύρης, Εξέχοντα μεταβυζαντινά τέμπλα του Αγίου Όρους, in Ch. Christou (ed.), *Αθωνική Πολιτεία. Επί τη χιλιετηρίδι του Αγίου Όρους,* Thessaloniki 1963, 315-345.

90. See also the templon in the monastery's burial church: Androudis (n. 70) 70-71.

91. A fragment of an epistyle from the chapel of Saint Demetrius in Xenophontos monastery is the earliest wooden templon in Athos: N. Nikonanos, Ξυλόγλυπτα του Παλαιού Καθολικού, in *Ξενοφώντος: εικόνες* (n. 75) 237-238.

92. N. Nikonanos, Τα ξυλόγλυπτα, in *Κειμήλια Πρωτάτου* (n. 32) 129-134. I. Tavlakis, Η ζωγραφική του παλαιού ξυλόγλυπτου τέμπλου του καθολικού της μονής Βατοπεδίου (17ος αι.) in P. Gounaridis (ed.), *Ιερά Μονή Βατοπεδίου. Ιστορία και Τέχνη*, Athens 1999, 225-41. The 1616 iconostasis of Vatopedi was later replaced by another one in 1788. The latter's installation necessitated the removal of the marble templon.

93. A. Lidov, Ikonostas. Itogi i perspektiv issledovanija, in Idem (ed.), *Ikonostas: proishoždenie, razvitie, simvolika*, Moscow 2000, 11-29. The author convincingly assigns these developments to the influence of Philotheos Kokkinos.

94. It is interesting to note that this shift in the role of Athos in sanctuary barrier planning coincided with the rise of its importance in liturgical matters, beginning with the activity of patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos. See Taft (n. 55) 192-194.

The various approaches adopted in this article resulted in multiple conclusions pertaining to the nature of sculpture during the first days of the great coenobitic institutions of Mount Athos. It has been shown that constructing a marble *templon* was a project of high priority during the completion of a monastic church. Although their decoration was rather simple, in accordance with the austere rule favoured by Saint Athanasius, they were generally of the highest artistic quality and their imposing monumental character was the result of a costly and meticulously organized procedure, that included provision of material or spolia and assemblage of the parts, as well as execution of the relief decoration by specialized craftsmen. Their continuous use during subsequent centuries testifies to their constant importance and appreciation on behalf of the Athonites, since various elements continued to be added to them until the early post-Byzantine period.[95] Even when they fell into disuse, their qualities were appreciated by monks and pilgrims. The 18th-century writer John Komnenos in his pilgrimage guide to Mount Athos expressed his admiration of the marble templon of Vatopedi, which was then hidden behind the wooden iconostasis.[96] Later, when the same templon was dismantled and removed from the katholikon, its components were treated with great respect and reassembled in prominent positions in the chapel of the Holy Girdle as relics of the monastery's venerated past.

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95. Moreover, the post-Byzantine wooden iconostasis in the main church of Xenophontos monastery incorporates the marble closure slabs of the Middle Byzantine templon.
96. I. Komnenos, *Προσκυνητάριον του Αγίου Όρους του Άθωνος*, Snagov 1701 (8th edition: Mount Athos 1984) 48. Komnenos was followed by the Russian traveler Vassilij Barskij in 1744, who shared his admiration in his account of his journey to Mount Athos: V. G. Barskij, *Vtoroe poscenie skatoj Afoiskoj gory*, Saint Petersburg 1887, 194-198.

# Τα μεσοβυζαντινά τέμπλα του Αγίου Όρους και η εξέλιξή τους σε εικονοστάσια

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Τα μαρμάρινα τέμπλα των καθολικών των μονών Λαύρας, Βατοπεδίου και Ιβήρων, καθώς και εκείνο του Πρωτάτου στις Καρυές του Αγίου Όρους, αποτελούν τα πρωιμότερα δείγματα του είδους στην αθωνική χερσόνησο. Από αυτά μόνο το τέμπλο του Πρωτάτου βρίσκεται μέχρι σήμερα στην αρχική του θέση και είναι ορατό, μετά την απομάκρυνση του μεταβυζαντινού εικονοστασίου από τον Ορλάνδο κατά τη δεκαετία του 1950. Τα αντίστοιχα τέμπλα των τριών άλλων καθιδρυμάτων έχουν αφαιρεθεί από τη θέση τους ή είναι κρυμμένα πίσω από μεταγενέστερα ξυλόγλυπτα, αλλά η μορφή τους έχει αποκατασταθεί με βάση τα σωζόμενα κατάλοιπα. Οι ομοιότητες των τεσσάρων τέμπλων και η σημασία τους για τη μελέτη της μεσοβυζαντινής γλυπτικής έχουν πολλές φορές επισημανθεί από την έρευνα. Η σφαιρική μελέτη όλων των πτυχών τους οδηγεί σε ακόμη περισσότερα συμπεράσματα σχετικά με τον ρόλο τους στα αντίστοιχα μνημεία και τη θέση τους στην ιστορία της εξέλιξης του βυζαντινού τέμπλου.

Τα υπό εξέταση τέμπλα αποτελούνται από ένα επιστύλιο που στηρίζεται σε κίονες, τους οποίους επιστέφουν περίτεχνα κιονόκρανα. Τα κενά μεταξύ των κιόνων φράσσονται με θωράκια. Το τέμπλο του Πρωτάτου ενσωματώνει και τα γύψινα τοξωτά πλαίσια των ανατολικών πεσσών της εκκλησίας, διαμορφώνοντας προσκυνητάρια. Αξιοσημείωτη είναι η χρήση παλαιοχριστιανικού υλικού σε δεύτερη χρήση, ιδιαίτερα στη Μονή Ιβήρων. Η ανάγλυφη διακόσμηση συνίσταται κυρίως σε φυτικά θέματα, που καταλαμβάνουν το επιστύλιο και τα κιονόκρανα, και σε γεωμετρικά σχήματα, όπως ρόμβους, που κοσμούν τα θωράκια. Το τέμπλο του Βατοπεδίου διακρίνεται για τις εντυπωσιακές παραστάσεις αετών που κοσμούν τα κιονόκρανα.

Η μορφή των τέμπλων αυτών, καθώς και η θεματική τους, ακολουθεί τα καθιερωμένα για την εποχή πρότυπα, όπως αυτά είναι γνωστά από μνημεία της Ελλάδας και της Μικράς Ασίας. Φαίνεται μάλιστα ότι τα αγιορειτικά μνημεία απηχούν κωνσταντινουπολίτικα πρότυπα, όπως προκύπτει και από την ανάλυ-

ση των τεχνοτροπικών χαρακτηριστικών τους. Επιπλέον, μέρος του μαρμάρου έχει πιθανώς μεταφερθεί από τη βυζαντινή πρωτεύουσα, πράγμα φυσικό, αφού είναι γνωστές οι διασυνδέσεις του οσίου Αθανασίου του αγιορείτη και των άλλων ιδρυτών Μονών του Αγίου Όρους με την Κωνσταντινούπολη, αλλά και η ενίσχυση που παρείχε η αυτοκρατορική εξουσία στην ανοικοδόμηση των αντίστοιχων καθολικών.

Η προσεκτική ανάλυση των αρχαιολογικών δεδομένων, σε συνδυασμό με τη μαρτυρία των σύγχρονων πηγών, δείχνει ότι η εγκατάσταση των τέμπλων, η οποία ήταν αποτέλεσμα μιας περίπλοκης διαδικασίας, αποτελούσε μία από τις βασικές προτεραιότητες των ιδρυτών των Μονών κατά την ανέγερση ενός καθολικού. Έτσι, τα μαρμάρινα τέμπλα πρέπει να χρονολογηθούν στο ξεκίνημα των εργασιών ανέγερσης κάθε μνημείου: στο διάστημα 962-964 της Λαύρας, μεταξύ 964-969 του Πρωτάτου και στις αρχές της δεκαετίας του 980 εκείνα του Βατοπεδίου και της Μονής Ιβήρων. Βασικός στόχος της επιλογής τόσο εντυπωσιακών μνημειακών συνόλων ήταν προφανώς η προσπάθεια να μεταφερθούν και να καθιερωθούν κωνσταντινουπολίτικες πρακτικές στο μέχρι τότε ερημιτικό περιβάλλον της αθωνικής χερσονήσου.

Τα τέμπλα των πρώτων καθιδρυμάτων του Αγίου Όρους αποτέλεσαν το πρότυπο και για τα υπόλοιπα μοναστήρια που ανοικοδομήθηκαν στα τέλη του 10ου και τον 11ο αι. Έτσι, τα τέμπλα των Μονών Δοχειαρίου και Ξενοφώντος, για παράδειγμα, εμφανίζουν παρόμοια χαρακτηριστικά. Σταδιακά, τα πρώτα μαρμάρινα τέμπλα άρχισαν να εμπλουτίζονται με την προσθήκη γραπτών επιστυλίων και εικόνων που έφραζαν τα κενά μεταξύ των θωρακίων και των επιστυλίων, στοιχεία τα οποία συναποτελούν αυτόνομα εικονογραφικά προγράμματα που αναπτύσσονται μπροστά από το Ιερό. Η προσθήκη αυτών των έργων και το περιεχόμενό τους πρέπει να αποδοθεί σε δωρεές και χορηγίες, οι οποίες μετά τον 12ο αιώνα αυξήθηκαν σημαντικά με την ανάδειξη του Αγίου Όρους σε σπουδαίο προσκυνηματικό κέντρο.



**Fig. 1.** Vatopedi monastery, chapel of Hagia Zone: fragment of templon epistyle from the main church (Th. Pazaras, *Τα βυζαντινά γλυπτά της Μονής Βατοπεδίου*, Thessaloniki 2001, figs. 32-35).



**Fig. 2.** Vatopedi monastery, main church, outer narthex (northern part of west façade): closure slabs from the templon (Th. Pazaras, *Τα βυζαντινά γλυπτά της Μονής Βατοπεδίου,* Thessaloniki 2001, fig. 43).





**Fig. 3.** Vatopedi monastery, chapel of Hagia Zone: capital from the templon of the main church (Th. Pazaras, *Τα βυζαντινά γλυπτά της Μονής Βατοπεδίου,* Thessaloniki 2001, figs. 50, 51).



**Fig. 4.** Iviron monastery, main church: templon column (Th. Pazaras, Το μαρμάρινο τέμπλο του καθολικού της Μονής Ιβήρων, in *Άγιον Όρος, Φύση-Λατρεία-Τέχνη,* vol. 2, Thessaloniki 2001, figs. 1, 2).



**Fig. 5.** Iviron monastery, outside the refectory: closure slab from the templon.

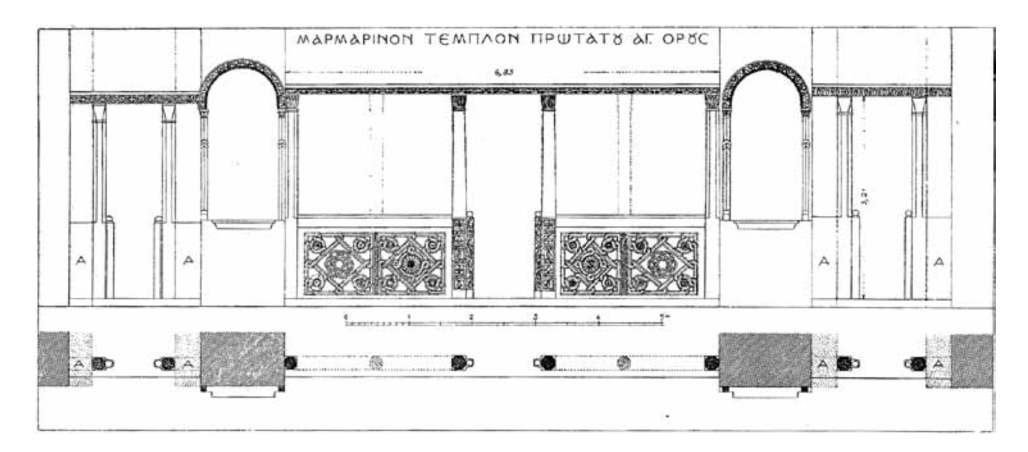



**Fig. 6.** Karyes, Protaton church, drawing of the sanctuary barrier [from A. K. Orlandos, Το μαρμάρινον τέμπλον του Πρωτάτου των Καρυών, *ΕΕΒΣ* 23 (1953), 85, fig. 1].



**Fig. 7.** Karyes, Protaton church: templon closure slab.



**Fig. 8.** Karyes, Protaton church: templon column [A. K. Orlandos, Το μαρμάρινον τέμπλον του Πρωτάτου των Καρυών, *ΕΕΒΣ* 23 (1953), fig. 3].



**Fig. 9.** Karyes, Protaton church: Proskynetarion (*Μανουήλ Πανσέληνος εκ του Ιερού Ναού του Πρωτάτου*, Thessaloniki 2003, fig. 91).



**Fig. 10.** Lavra, phiale: closure slab from the templon of the main church.



**Fig. 11.** Xenophontos monastery: view of the sanctuary barrier (in situ) (*Ιερά Μονή Ξενοφώντος: εικόνες*, Άγιον Όρος 1998, fig. 105).



**Fig. 12.** Vatopedi monastery, chapel of Saint Nicholas: view of the templon (in situ) (Th. Pazaras, *Τα βυζαντινά γλυπτά της Μονής Βατοπεδίου,* Thessaloniki 2001, fig. 129).



**Fig. 13.** Hosios Loukas, Katholikon: view of the sanctuary barrier (in situ).



**Fig. 14.** Karyes, Protaton church: general view of the interior, looking east (*Μανουήλ Πανσέληνος εκ του Ιερού Ναού του Πρωτάτου*, Thessaloniki 2003, fig. 3).